DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 136 742 IR 004 409

AUTHOR Leeper, Dennis P.
TITLE A Comparative Study of Open Space and Self-Contained Elementary School Library-Media Centers.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 4p.; Paper presented at American Association of School Librarians Forum for Research (Chicago, Illinois, July 21, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Libraries; Instructional Materials Centers; Library Collections; *Open Plan Schools; School Personnel; School Space; *Self Contained Classrooms; Use Studies

ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the results of a study comparing the usage, expenditures, services, collections, and staffing of elementary school library media centers by type of structural design, i.e., either open space or self contained classroom type. It suggests that school personnel, particularly the principal and library media specialist, rather than school size or type of physical facilities, are the most important variables in determining the quality and quantity of elementary school media center use. Twenty-four open space and twenty-four self contained randomly selected elementary schools located within nine school districts in north central Colorado constitute the experimental sample. (STS)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OPEN SPACE AND SELF-CONTAINED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTERS

by

Dennis P. Leeper

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OPEN SPACE AND SELF-CONTAINED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTERS

This study was undertaken in an attempt to determine the effects associated with major structural changes in elementary schools and their library-media centers. The basic objectives of the study were to search for measurable differences in library-media center usage, expenditures, services, collections, and staffing between open space and self-contained schools. The study was also designed to probe for differences in the attitudes of students, teachers, principals, and library-media persons toward library-media centers in open space and self-contained schools.

Four principal null hypotheses were tested using analysis of covariance or analysis of variance and the Newman-Keuls multiple comparison procedure when appropriate. The principal hypotheses were: (1) there are no differences between types of elementary school as measured by specified dependent variables; (2) there are no differences between sizes of elementary school as measured by specified dependent variables; (3) there are no differences between sex or grade level of elementary school students as measured by specified dependent variables; and (4) there are no interactions between the main effects of the specified variables. The .10 level of significance was selected a priori for all hypothesis testing.

The sample consisted of 24 open space and 24 self-contained randomly selected elementary schools located within nine school districts in north central Colorado. Each school was stratified by size of enrollment. Three different factorial designs were employed to facilitate the collection of data from the 48 library-media persons, 48 principals, 96 teachers, and 144 students who participated in the study.

Some of the conclusions reached as a result of the analysis of data were that: (1) library-media persons in open space

schools provided a greater number of services to both students ($p < .01$) and teachers ($p < .09$); (2) students in open space schools were more likely ($p < .05$) to receive instruction in the use of library-media center materials and/or equipment; (3) teachers, principals, and library-media persons in open space schools expressed more positive attitudes ($p < .05$) regarding library-media center services to students and teachers; (4) library-media persons in the open space schools had nearly twice as many hours of paid aide time per week ($p < .05$) as their colleagues in self-contained schools; (5) library-media persons in open space schools expressed a higher degree of satisfaction ($p < .07$) with the physical facilities of their library-media centers; (6) open space library-media centers were allotted an average of 2061 square feet of space, while self-contained library-media centers averaged 1253 square feet of space; (7) per student expenditures for library-media center materials and equipment were greater in open space schools than in self-contained schools; (8) medium size schools expend more per student for library-media center materials and equipment than large schools; (9) students in medium size schools use their library-media centers to a greater extent ($p < .001$) than students in large size schools; (10) there are more volumes of books ($p < .005$) in self-contained library-media centers; and (11) self-contained schools are more likely ($p < .01$) to employ persons who are certified as library-media specialists by the State of Colorado.

Although this study was designed to look for measurable differences between types and sizes of school, the data indicated that library-media center usage, services, staffing, expenditures, collections, and the attitudes of students, teachers, principals, and library-media persons varied more between individual schools than between types or sizes of school. This finding suggests that individuals, particularly the principal and the library-media person, are the most important variables in determining the quantity and quality of use made of elementary school library-media centers.